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Lecture cites benefits of technology

Week of festivities and lectures raise awareness of the role of geography

By Tricia Schwennesen
 Oregon Daily Emerald

Geography — it's more than just maps.

It is the fundamental understanding of how the world works, said Bill Loy, professor emeritus of geography.

But more and more, geography is done using Geographic Information System technology and computer graphics programs shared on the Web.

"We still honor maps, and we still make maps, and we still like maps, but we are spending more time with Web sites to share geographic information," Loy said.

Dr. Michael Goodchild, a geographic information science scholar from the University of California, Santa Barbara, told more than 60 students and faculty members in a lecture that there are several possible reasons that GIS should be considered a science in an academic environment. Goodchild's lecture was given at the Chiles Business Center on Tuesday and was part of National Geography Awareness Week festivities which continue throughout the week. This year's theme is "People, Places, and Patterns: Geography puts the pieces together."

"It's a mature technology like word processing or spreadsheets," Goodchild said. "It's so easy a 10-year-old child could do it."

Some people say GIS is like a branch of engineering, concerned

Lectures

WHO: Professor Ronald Wixman
WHAT: "What is going on in Russia?"

WHEN: Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: 207 Chapman Hall

WHO: Professor Cathy Whitlock
WHAT: "Northwest Forests in the Face of Climate Change: Their history and Future"

WHEN: Friday, 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: 100 Willamette Hall

WHY: For Geography Awareness Week

largely with practice, or that it is an immature technology whose development requires significant advanced research.

Goodchild said the reason he supports it is that GIS is "a technology that requires a strong theoretical and conceptual framework that has not yet been developed."

He said he explains GIS to other people as a container for paper maps, much like early automobiles were described as horseless carriages.

"The paper map has constrained our way of thinking of GIS," he said. "Certainly GIS can represent distance, location and proximity, but we have not made much progress in sense of place."

As part of the Geography Awareness celebration, the University's department of geography unveiled a Web site this week that tries to show a sense of place in Eugene.

The department of geography,

with the advice of several Eugene high school teachers, two seminar classes of students and Masao Matsuoka, a graduate student, created the Web site for citizens of Eugene's sister city, Kakegawa, Japan.

Now citizens of Kakegawa can get to the know the geography of Eugene, including Eugene's location, what it's like to live here, what the economy is like and transportation, energy sources, food and water supply.

"Masao has taken something that was really crude, the first draft of student work and developed it into this Web site," Loy said.

Twenty-two Kakegawa teachers are currently working on a mirror image project for their city.

Loy said geography is more than place locations: it's natural systems, cultural systems, weather systems and national policies.

"I see all of this understanding as more geographical understanding, and that's more than just learning the names of the capitals," Loy said.

The true meaning of geography was lost about 30 years ago when it was lumped together with history and political science and called social science, Loy said.

President Reagan declared this week National Geography Awareness Week after the National Geographic Company and the Association of American Geographers decided something needed to be done to reclaim geography as a separate field of study.

Loy said Geographic Alliance has invested \$80 million in training teachers in geography.



(Reported from Nov. 10 to Nov. 16)
 Nov. 13, Criminal Mischief and Unlawful Distribution of a Controlled Substance, 1750 Alder St.: Culinary Institute student arrested.

Nov. 14, Unlawful Distribution of a Controlled Substance, 14th Avenue and Ferry Street: minor arrested after running from police.
 Nov. 14, Shoplift II, Duckshop, 2735 Leo Harris Parkway: minor arrested for trying to shoplift hats.
 Nov. 14, Shoplift II, Duckshop, 2735 Leo Harris Parkway: another minor arrested for trying to shoplift hats.
 Nov. 14, Assault III, 1805 Garden Ave.: victim attacked by three males,

one female. Case suspended for lack of suspect information.
 Nov. 15, Shoplift II, University Bookstore, 895 E. 13th Ave.: minor attempted to steal rings, pen set.
 Nov. 15, Theft I, 715 1/2 E. 16th Ave.: items stolen from vehicle.
 Nov. 15, Theft II, 2250 Patterson St.: bike stolen.
 Nov. 15, Theft II, 1571 High St.: item stolen from yard.

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